

High Schools Configuration Feedback Synthesis



Process



| High School Configuration Timeline and Process | | |
|--|-------|--|
| Board Learning | | |
| October - November | Board | Academics Co-Curriculars Athletics Financial Analysis |
| December | Board | Engagement Planning Survey Development |
| Community Engagement (if proceeding to next phase) | | |
| January - February | | Community Forums Focus Groups Survey |
| Decision-Making | | |
| February - March | | Review feedback, develop recommendations, Board action |
| Action Steps (if needed) | | |
| April 2026 through August of 2027 (16 months) Implementation September 2027, aligns with district reconfiguration | | |



Engagement



Communication & Outreach

- Media coverage (press releases, digital, print, and social media)
- Dedicated webpage on the district website
- District newsletter shared with the community

Direct Communication

- Direct emails sent to families and students in grades 7–12
(approximately 7,500 recipients)

Community Feedback

- Online survey open to stakeholders
- Student focus groups (grades 7–12)

In-Person Engagement

- Community Conversations (64 attendees across two meetings)
- High school staff meeting discussions
- Student listening sessions during lunch periods
(grades 7–12)



Community Meetings



Academics & Student Experience

- Several participants emphasized the importance of keeping academics central to the conversation.
- Noted that many academic programs are already shared across both schools.
- Interest in ensuring any changes prioritize student success and access to programs.

Athletics & Participation

- Declining participation across several sports and difficulty fielding full teams.
- Students sometimes playing “up” levels due to low numbers, raising safety concerns.
- Club sports and year-round specialization reducing high school participation.
- Desire for more competitive teams and stronger programs.



Opportunities for Students

- Mixed views on whether combining schools would increase or decrease opportunities.
- Some believe consolidation could allow more JV levels and intramural options.
- Others worry about roster limits in certain sports and reduced access for some students.

Community Identity & School Spirit

- Many believe two high schools divide the community and dilute school spirit.
- Interest in building one unified West Bend identity and stronger fan support.
- Others value the tradition and rivalry between East and West.



Student Enrollment & School Choice

- Perception that some families choose districts for more competitive athletics or programs.
- Concern that declining participation may influence school choice decisions.
- Some believe consolidation could make the district more attractive to families.

Financial & Operational Considerations

- Questions about potential cost savings, facility use, transportation, and booster funding.
- Interest in reinvesting savings into facilities, programs, or additional opportunities.

Badger Students

Lunch Conversations

208 prefer one high school

141 prefer current model

60 had no opinion



Why Some Students Prefer ONE High School

Unified Identity – Students want to feel like one school community rather than divided between East and West.

Stronger Athletic Programs – Combining teams could create fuller rosters, stronger competition, and more opportunities to compete weekly.

Less Division Among Friends – Students currently share classes, youth teams, and middle schools but are split in high school.

Fairness in Athletics – School choice based on sports performance creates imbalance; one school could remove that dynamic.

Simplicity & Clarity – Many programs and classes are already combined, so having one school feels more logical.

Why Some Students Prefer TWO Schools

Tradition & Rivalry – Some enjoy the East vs. West rivalry and events like Homecoming.

Unique School Identity – Two schools allow each campus to maintain its own traditions, colors, and identity.

More Roster Spots – Two schools can create more varsity opportunities in certain sports.

East & West Students



Lunch Conversations

219 prefer one high school

345 prefer current model (many for their high school years)

149 had no opinion

Why Some Students Prefer ONE High School

Stronger Athletics – Combining talent could create more competitive teams, fuller rosters, and better weekly competition.

Unity & Community – One school could reduce division and create a stronger sense of school spirit and shared identity.

Fairness in Athletics – School choice based on sports can create imbalance between teams.

Less Division Among Friends – Students often play together in youth sports and classes before high school but are split later.

Programs Already Shared – Many activities and classes are already combined, so one school feels more logical to some students.

Why Some Students Prefer TWO High Schools

Tradition & Legacy – Students value the long history of East and West and want to preserve existing traditions.

Rivalry & School Spirit – The East vs. West rivalry and Homecoming games are meaningful parts of student culture.

More Athletic Opportunities – Concern that combining schools could lead to fewer roster spots and more cuts.

Unique School Identity – Students appreciate each school having its own mascot, culture, and traditions.

Familiarity & Stability – Some students prefer keeping the system they know rather than navigating a major change.

Staff



Academics

Shared understanding that the academic program is the same for all students.

Athletic Competitiveness & Safety

- Combining schools could strengthen teams and address low participation.
- Concerns about roster spots balanced with benefits of deeper programs and safer athlete development.

Student Opportunities

- Mixed perspectives: potential for more developmental levels (JV/Freshman) vs. concerns about reduced playing time in some sports.

School Spirit & Traditions

- Some nostalgia for the East–West rivalry and Homecoming traditions.
- Others see opportunity to create new traditions and stronger unified school spirit.

Community Unity

- Many believe a single high school could bring the community together and allow students to graduate and compete alongside more peers.

Financial & Operational Considerations

- Long-term cost savings and improved facility scheduling viewed as important factors in the decision.



Email Communication



Community Unity

- Several contributors believe a single high school could strengthen community pride and shared identity.
- Current East/West structure is perceived by some as creating division among students and the broader community.

Athletics & Student Opportunities

- Some feel a combined school could lead to stronger athletic programs, fuller teams, and broader competition.
- Others expressed concern that two schools provide more roster spots and participation opportunities for students.

School Spirit & Traditions

- Supporters of consolidation believe one school could build stronger collective spirit.
- Others value the East vs. West rivalry and traditions, which create excitement and engagement for students.

Operational & Enrollment Considerations

- Combining schools could reduce duplication of services and facility congestion.
- Declining enrollment was noted as a factor influencing the discussion.

Student Experience

- Some community members believe students would benefit from winning, losing, and representing the community together.
- Others expressed emotional attachment to the existing structure and school identity.

*For reference, 5 additional emails were received



Survey

Online survey open from February 2 through February 16



2,588 responses (Check all that apply)

- 1181 Parent/Guardians
- 574 Community Members
- 440 Alumni
- 811 Students
- 267 Staff
- 94 Other
- 9 No Answer

School Affiliation (Check all that apply)

- 124 4K/Rolfs
- 351 Decorah
- 341 Fair Park
- 302 Green Tree
- 323 Jackson
- 423 McLane
- 1165 Silverbrook
- 1397 Badger
- 890 East
- 986 West
- 148 NA or No Answer

Years Connected to the District

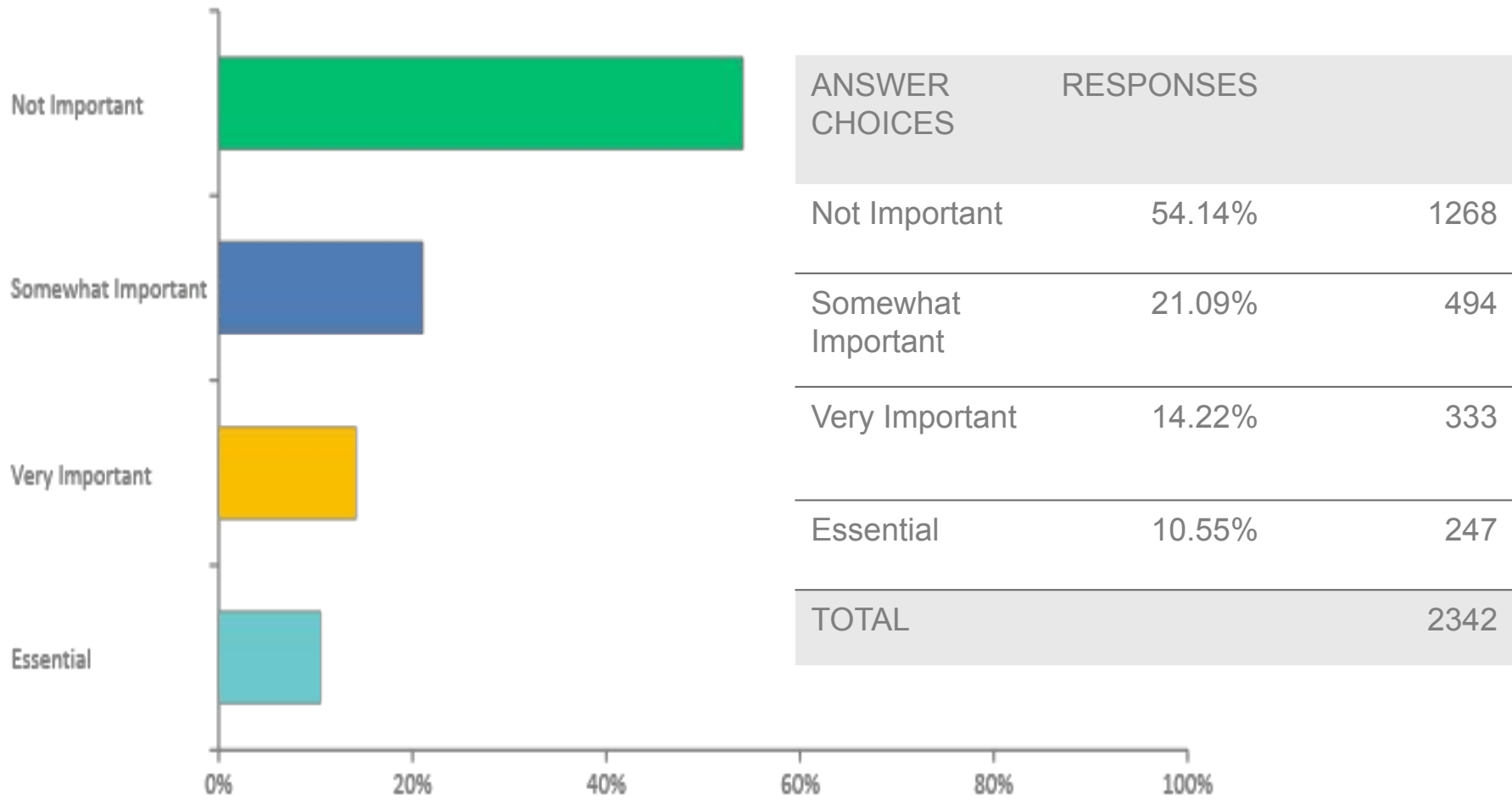
- 1065 0-10 Years
- 783 11-20 Years
- 728 21+ Years



*For reference, the 2024 Referendum Survey yielded 1609 responses

Q4: How important is it to you that the district continues to operate both East and West high schools on one campus?

Answered: 2342 ,: 246



Q5: How important is it to you that the district continues to operate both East and West high schools on one campus? Explain your response:

Community Identity & Tradition

- Strong emotional connection to East vs. West identity
- Concerns about losing school pride, traditions, and rivalries
- Some believe two schools strengthen community engagement



Opportunities

- Many comments suggested combining into one high school. Perceived benefits: Larger course offerings, Unified extracurricular programs, More efficient staffing and scheduling
- Sports and teams were the most frequently referenced topic. Comments focused on: team competitiveness, roster spots, combining sports programs.
- Concerns that maintaining two schools can lead to: Uneven course offerings, Duplicated programs, Differences in access to activities
- Many responses referenced enrollment levels and school capacity, including whether the district is large enough to support two schools.

Facilities & Capacity Considerations

- Discussion around:
 - Whether existing buildings can support enrollment
 - Potential need for facility upgrades or reconfiguration
- Some respondents raised concerns about overcrowding if schools were merged

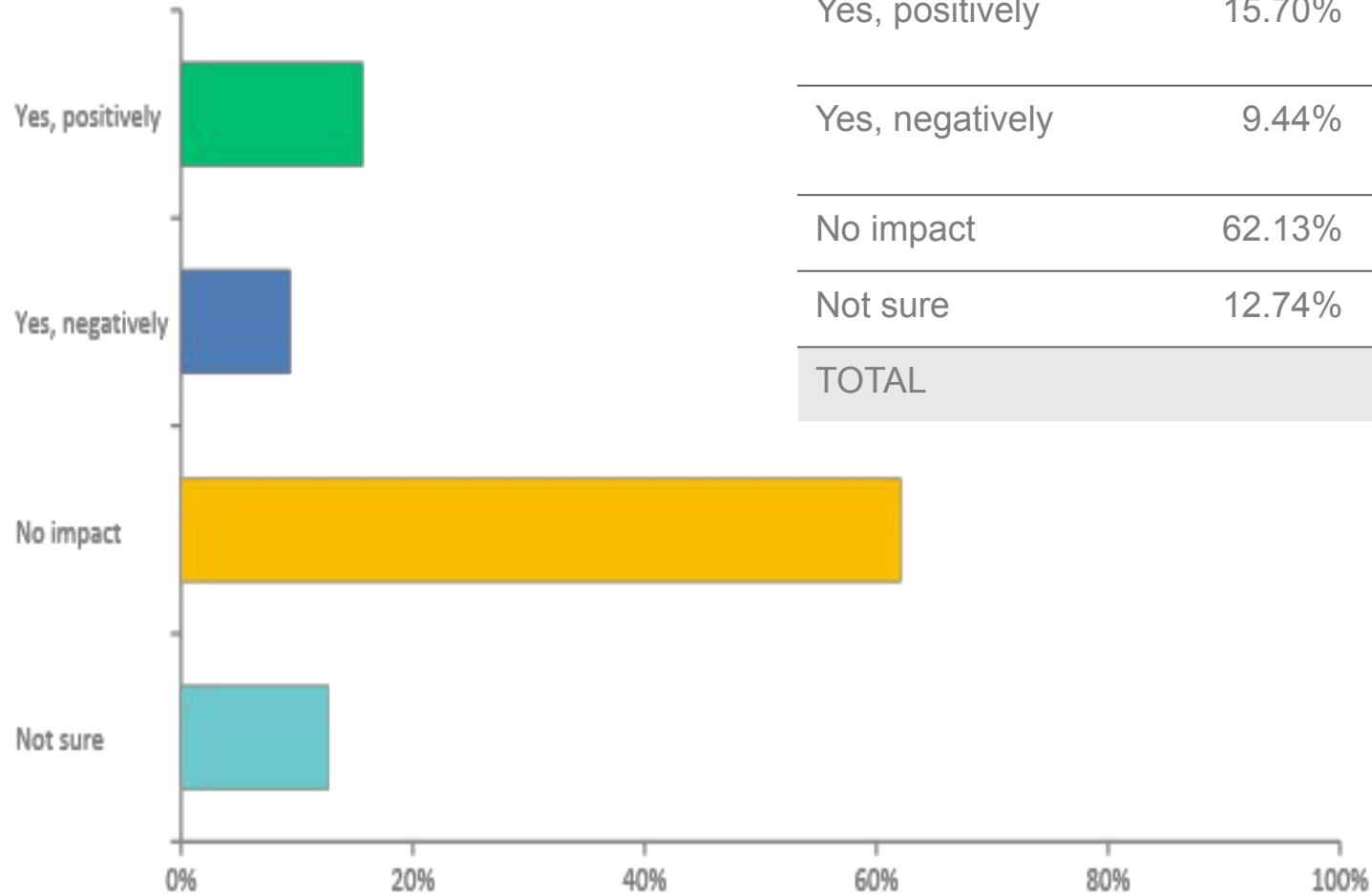


Financial Efficiency & Resource Use

- Questions about cost effectiveness of operating two high schools
- Some believe consolidation could: Reduce duplication of programs, Improve efficiency of staffing and resources

Q6: Does having two high school identities impact how you perceive the quality of education in West Bend?

Answered: 2268 ,: 320



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | COUNT |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| Yes, positively | 15.70% | 356 |
| Yes, negatively | 9.44% | 214 |
| No impact | 62.13% | 1409 |
| Not sure | 12.74% | 289 |
| TOTAL | | 2268 |

Q7: Please share any thoughts you have on academic programming or recognition:

Academic Quality Concerns

- Many respondents focused on whether structural changes would affect the quality of education.
- Some expressed concern about: Larger class sizes, Reduced individual attention,
- Maintaining strong academic standards and quality of importance.

Expanded Course Opportunities

- A large portion of comments suggested that combining resources could expand course offerings. Potential benefits mentioned: More AP or advanced courses, Expanded electives, Increased scheduling flexibility.
- Frequent references to equal opportunities across schools.

Extracurricular & Athletic Implications

- Respondents frequently referenced sports, activities, and student recognition.
- Key considerations: Competition for teams or leadership roles, Visibility for scholarships or awards, Maintaining strong extracurricular programming.

Teacher & Staffing Impact

- Several responses highlighted the importance of teachers in maintaining academic quality.
- Concerns included: Staffing levels, Teacher workload
- Preserving strong relationships between students and staff.

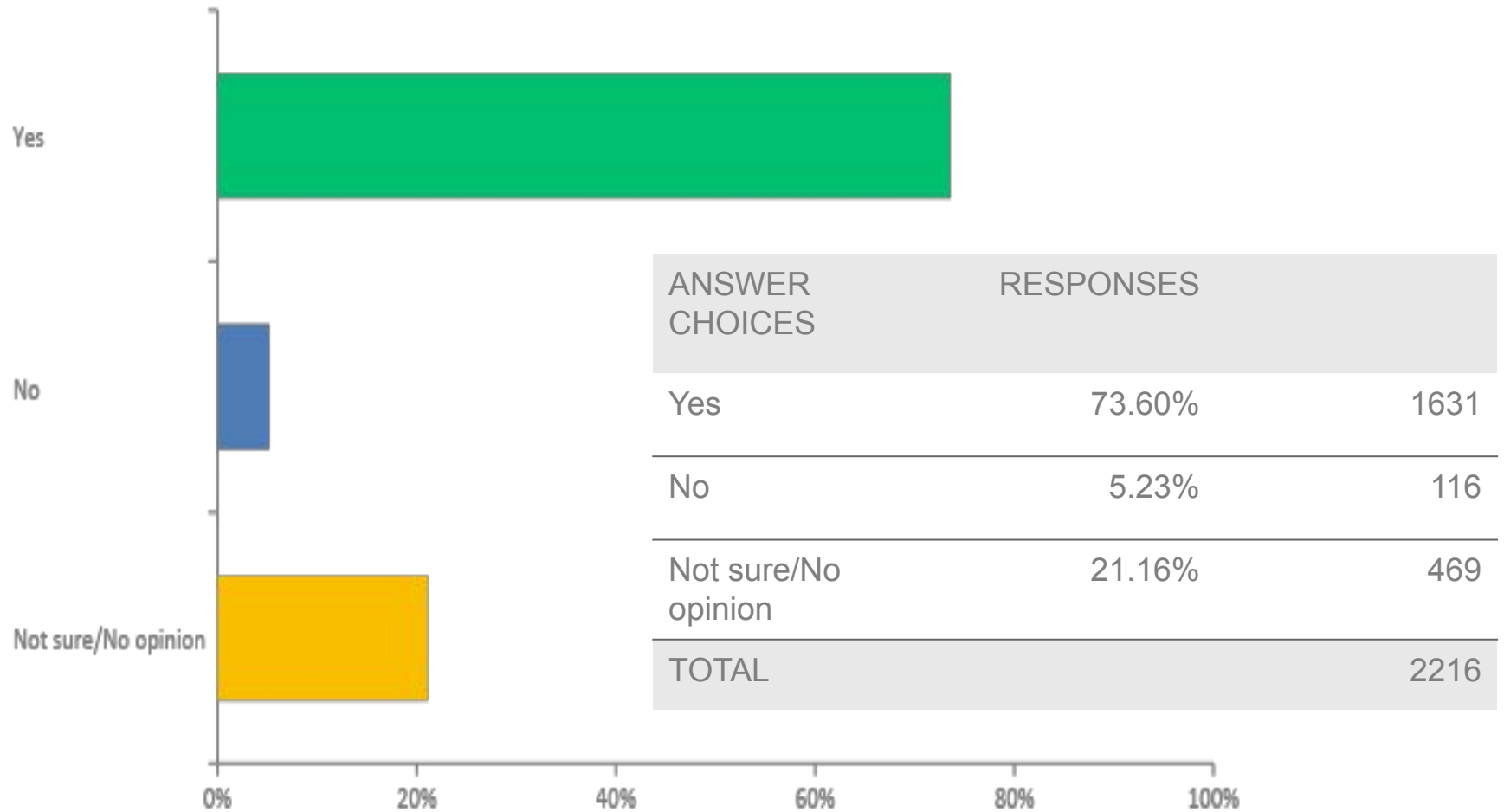
Minimal or No Academic Impact

- A notable portion of responses indicated little concern about academic changes.
- These respondents felt academic outcomes depend more on instruction and student effort than school structure.



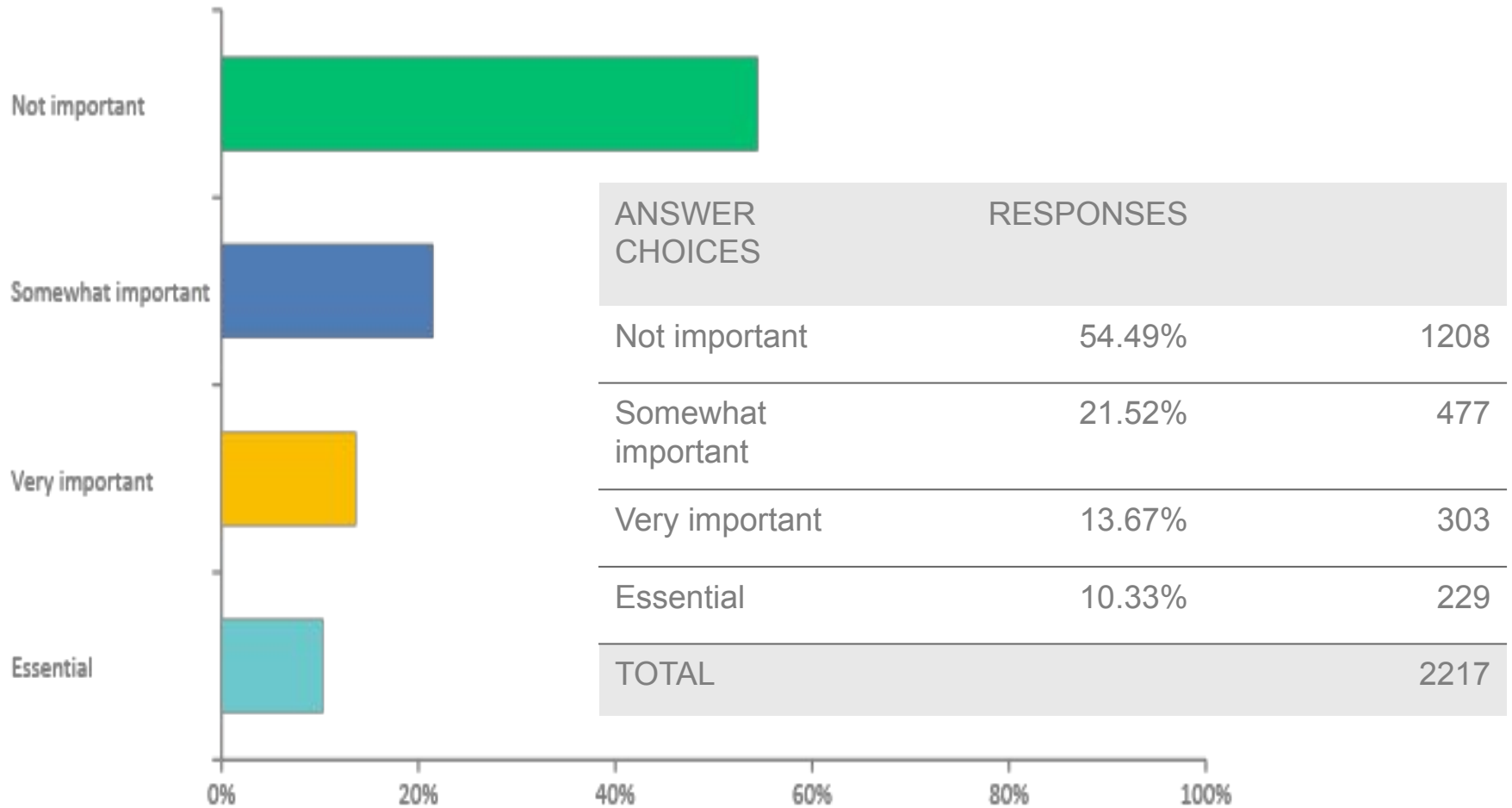
Q8: Are you satisfied with the current access students have to clubs and other co-curricular programs?

Answered: 2216 ,: 372



Q9: How important is it to you that each high school maintains its own social traditions (e.g., prom court)?

Answered: 2217 ,: 371



Q10: Please share any comments about co-curricular programs or traditions:

Access to Activities & Participation

- Most frequent concern: student access to sports, clubs, and activities.
- Some respondents worry a single school could:
 - Increase competition for teams and leadership roles
 - Reduce participation opportunities.
- Others believe combining could expand program offerings if resources are consolidated.

Importance of Traditions & School Identity

- Strong attachment to existing traditions such as:
 - East vs. West rivalry
 - Separate homecomings and prom courts
 - Individual school spirit.
- Some respondents feel these traditions define community identity.

Potential for Unified School Culture

- Another group supports creating a new unified identity if schools were combined.
- They believe a single school could:
 - Build stronger overall spirit
 - Create new traditions shared by all students.

Opportunities Across Schools

- Some respondents noted that maintaining two schools can lead to:
 - Uneven activity participation
 - Differences in program availability.
- Combining could potentially standardize opportunities for all students.

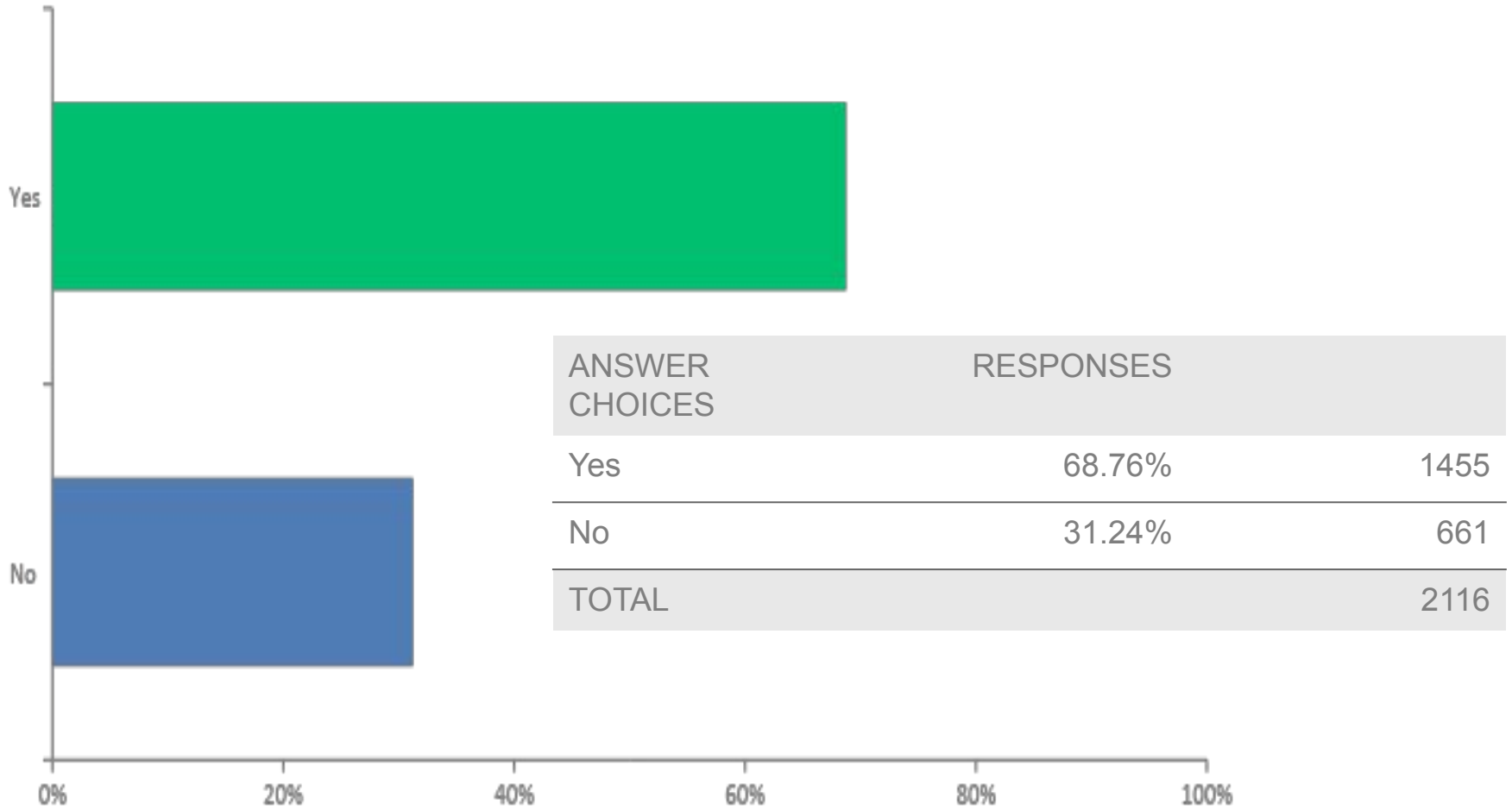
Minimal or No Impact on Activities

- A portion of respondents indicated co-curricular traditions are not a major factor in their opinion about school structure.
- These respondents prioritize academics, facilities, or finances instead.



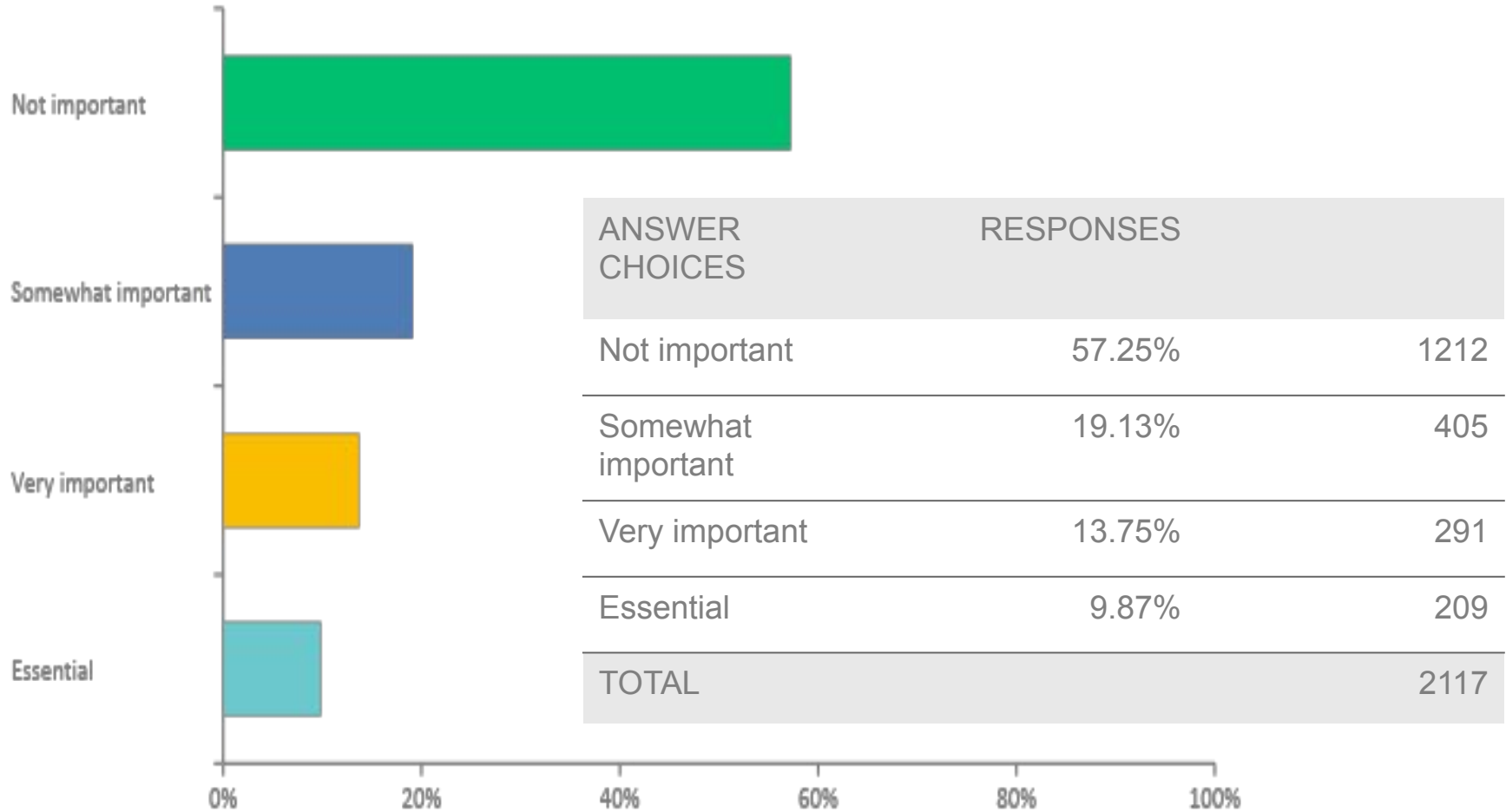
Q11: Were you aware that many (14+) athletic teams are already combined between East and West?

Answered: 2116 ,: 472

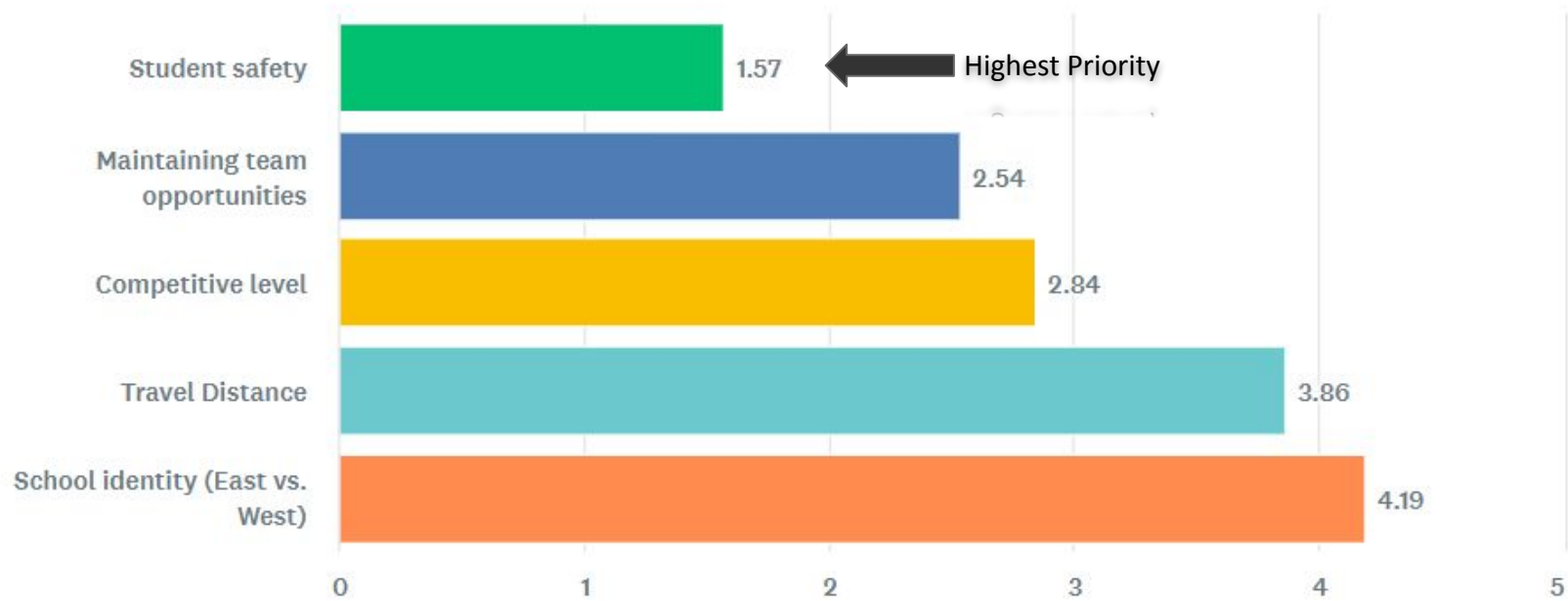


Q12: Currently East competes as the Suns, and West competes as the Spartans. How important is it to you that students compete on separate teams when able (not combined)?

Answered: 2117 , : 471



Q13: Please rank the following priorities for high school athletics (1 = most important):



| ↓ | ● 1 ↓ | ● 2 ↓ | ● 3 ↓ | ● 4 ↓ | ● 5 ↓ | Total ↑ | Weighted |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------|----------|
| Student safety | 70.18% 1431 | 13.88% 283 | 7.95% 162 | 4.66% 95 | 3.33% 68 | 2039 | 1.57 |
| Maintaining team opportunities | 12.31% 251 | 41.69% 850 | 28.25% 576 | 15.30% 312 | 2.45% 50 | 2039 | 2.54 |
| Competitive level | 11.87% 242 | 27.27% 556 | 32.61% 665 | 21.73% 443 | 6.52% 133 | 2039 | 2.84 |
| Travel Distance | 0.88% 18 | 8.39% 171 | 20.06% 409 | 45.02% 918 | 25.65% 523 | 2039 | 3.86 |
| School identity (East vs. West) | 4.76% 97 | 8.78% 179 | 11.13% 227 | 13.29% 271 | 62.04% 1265 | 2039 | 4.19 |
| | | | | | | 10195 | 3.00 |

Q14: Please share any other thoughts related to athletics:

Participation Opportunities

- The most common concern was maintaining opportunities for students to participate in sports.
- Respondents noted that combining schools could:
 - Increase competition for roster spots
 - Reduce participation opportunities for some students.

Team Competitiveness

- Many comments suggested that combining athletes from both schools could create stronger, more competitive teams.
- Potential benefits mentioned:
 - More depth of talent
 - Greater success in conference and state competition.

East vs. West Rivalry

- A large number of responses referenced the importance of the East vs. West rivalry.
- Respondents described it as:
 - A long-standing community tradition
 - A key element of school pride and engagement.

Program Sustainability

- Some respondents noted that certain sports struggle with low participation numbers at individual schools.
- Combining schools could help:
 - Maintain viable teams
 - Expand sport offerings.

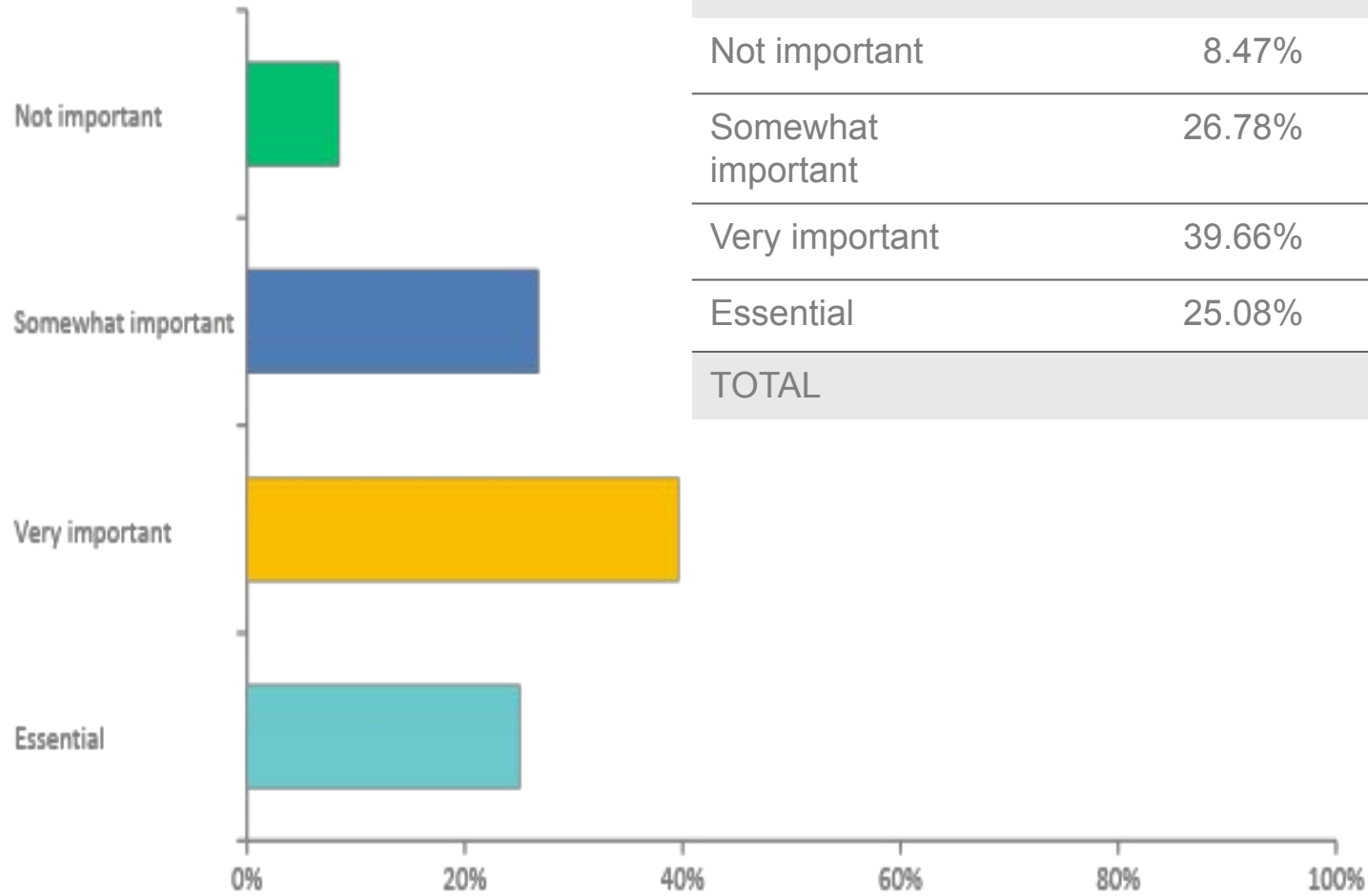
Minimal or Mixed Impact

- A portion of respondents indicated athletics should not drive the decision about school structure.
- These respondents emphasized that academics and student learning should remain the priority.



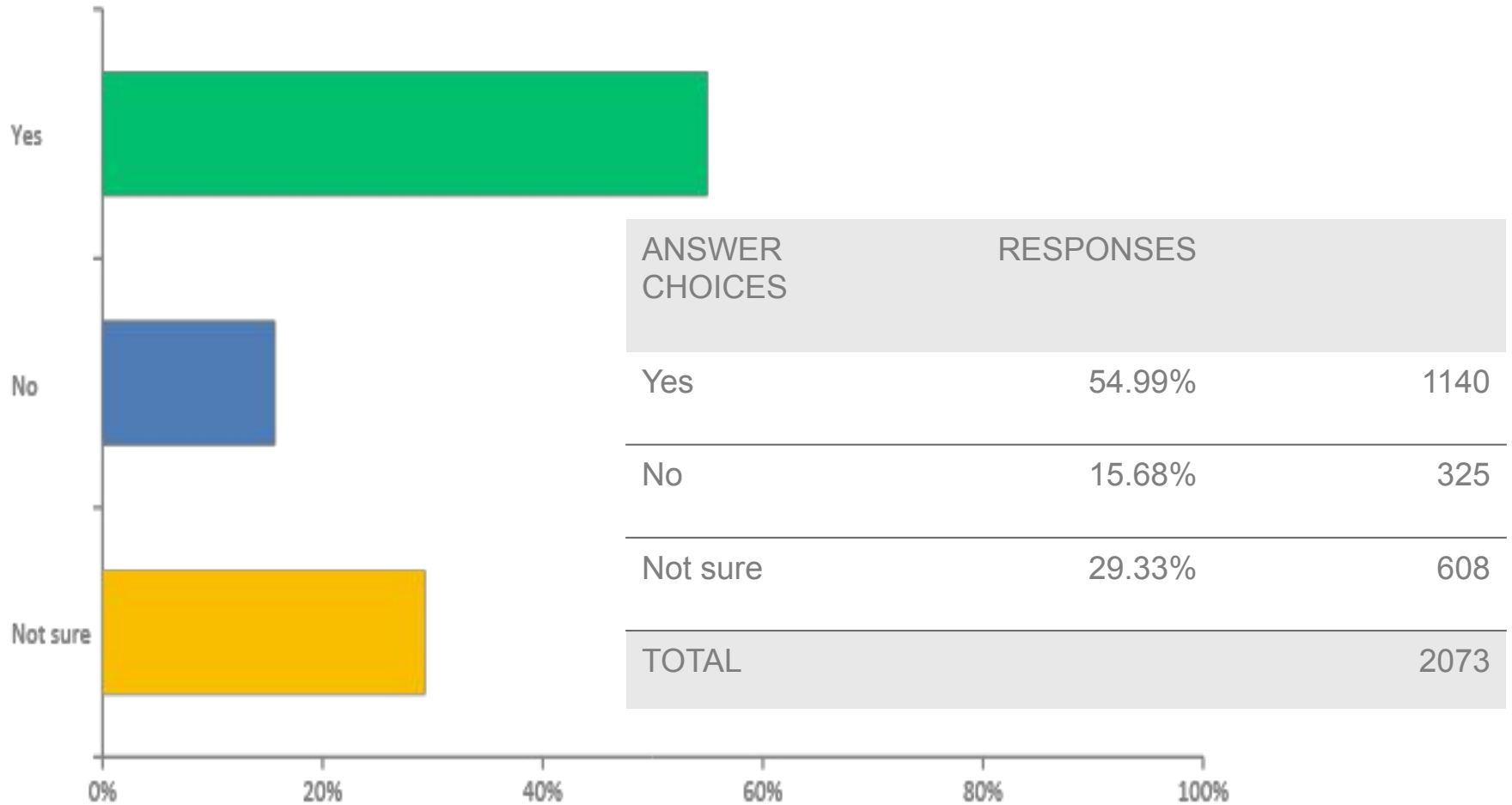
Q15: How important is financial sustainability to you when considering the future of high school configuration?

Answered: 2065 ,: 523



Q16: Would you support short-term costs (e.g., rebranding)?

Answered: 2073 ,: 515



Q17: Please share any comments or concerns about the financial impact:

Condition of Existing Facilities

- Many respondents referenced the current condition of East and West buildings.
- Comments focused on: Maintenance needs, Age of facilities, Need for modernization in some spaces.

Financial Responsibility and Efficient Spending

- They suggested that restructuring could: Improve building utilization, Reduce duplication of spaces or programs.
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Financial impact of restructuring: Uniforms, Logos, Signage

Neutral or Limited Impact

- A portion of respondents indicated facilities alone should not determine the decision.
- They emphasized prioritizing: Student learning, Academic programming, Community considerations.



Q18: What are your top 2–3 priorities when thinking about the future of high school configuration in West Bend?

Academic Quality & Opportunities

- Maintain strong academic programs
- Expand AP, electives, and career pathways
- Ensure students are prepared for college and careers

Student Experience & Belonging

- Students should feel known, supported, and connected
- Maintain positive school culture and relationships
- Avoid environments where students feel “lost”
- Safety referenced as a key priority

Participation Opportunities

- Protect access to sports, clubs, and leadership roles
- Concerns that larger schools could limit participation
- Desire for broad opportunities for student involvement

Community Identity & Traditions

- Strong connection to East and West pride and traditions
- Community values school spirit and local identity
- Importance of preserving meaningful traditions



Q19: Please share anything else you would like the district to consider as part of this process?

Academic Quality & Opportunities

- The most consistent priority across responses was maintaining or improving academic quality.
- Respondents emphasized: Strong instructional programs, Access to rigorous coursework, Expanded electives and AP opportunities.

Student Experience & School Culture

- Many comments focused on the overall student experience.
- Common considerations: School belonging and relationships, Maintaining positive school culture, Ensuring students feel known and supported.

Participation Opportunities

- Respondents frequently highlighted the importance of access to athletics, activities, and leadership opportunities.
- Concerns included: Increased competition for teams or clubs, Ensuring broad participation opportunities.

Financial Responsibility

- Many responses referenced the importance of cost-effective decisions.
- Priorities included: Responsible use of taxpayer funds, Long-term financial sustainability.

Facilities & Infrastructure

- Respondents also noted the importance of facility quality and capacity.
- Key concerns: Building condition, Adequate space for programs, Long-term facility planning.

Community Identity & Traditions

- A notable theme involved maintaining community traditions and school identity.
- Comments referenced: East/West pride, Community engagement and history.



Strategic Guidance for the Board Based on Community Feedback

Prioritize Academic Opportunities Above Structure

Across multiple questions, the strongest and most consistent theme was academic quality and opportunity.

Protect Student Participation Opportunities

A major concern across athletics, activities, and leadership programs was access for students. Safeguards to protect broad student participation.

Preserve Community Identity While Planning for the Future

The East–West identity appeared frequently. Traditions (old and new) are important. Continue engagement efforts throughout any planning.

Ensure Financial Responsibility

Many responses referenced taxpayer responsibility and long-term sustainability.



Process



| High School Configuration Timeline and Process | | |
|--|-------|--|
| Board Learning | | |
| October - November | Board | Academics Co-Curriculars Athletics Financial Analysis |
| December | Board | Engagement Planning Survey Development |
| Community Engagement (if proceeding to next phase) | | |
| January - February | | Community Forums Focus Groups Survey |
| Decision-Making | | |
| February - March | | Review feedback, develop recommendations, Board action |
| Action Steps (if needed) | | |
| April 2026 through August of 2027 (16 months) Implementation September 2027, aligns with district reconfiguration | | |

